

In the Claims

Claims are amended as follows:

1. (currently amended) A method of routing a contact in a network comprising a plurality of contact ~~centres~~ centers, said method comprising the steps of:-

- a) receiving a contact at one of the contact ~~centres~~ centers, said contact ~~centre~~ center being a source contact ~~centre~~ center;
- b) sending a reservation request from the source contact ~~centre~~ center to each of the contact ~~centres~~ centers including itself, said reservation request being for an agent with a specified relative intrinsic value;
- c) ~~for one or more of the said reservation requests request~~, receiving at the source contact ~~centre~~ center from each of one or more of the contact centers, a value of the specified intrinsic and an associated agent identifier;
- d) routing the received contact to one of the agents on the basis of the received intrinsic.

2. (original) A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said specified intrinsic is selected from nodal longest idle agent, average answer delay and calls queued count.

3. (currently amended) A method of routing a contact in a network comprising a plurality of contact ~~centres~~ centers, said method comprising the steps of:-

- (i) receiving a contact at one of the contact ~~centres~~ centers, said contact ~~centre~~ center being a source contact ~~centre~~ center;
- (ii) sending a reservation request from the source contact ~~centre~~ center to each of the contact ~~centres~~ centers including itself, said reservation request being for a nodal longest idle agent;

- (iii) ~~for one or more of the said~~ reservation requests request, receiving at the source contact ~~centre~~ center from each of one or more of the contact centers, a nodal longest idle time and associated agent identifier;
 - (iv) routing the received contact to the agent with the longest of all the received nodal longest idle times.
- 4. (original) A method as claimed in claim 1 which further comprises the step of (v) cancelling unused reservations.
- 5. (currently amended) A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said contact is received at any one of the contact ~~centres~~ centers.
- 6. (currently amended) A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said step (iii) of receiving at the source contact ~~centre~~ center is carried out in a pre-specified time interval.
- 7. (original) A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said contact is associated with a specified network skillset and wherein said ~~reservations requests are~~ reservation request is also for agents of that specified skillset.
- 8. (currently amended) A method as claimed in claim 3 which further comprises determining at the source contact ~~centre~~ center a network longest idle agent.
- 9. (cancelled)
- 10. (currently amended) A contact ~~centre~~ center suitable for use in a network of contact ~~centres~~ centers, said contact ~~centre~~ center comprising:
 - (i) an input arranged to receive a contact;
 - (ii) an output arranged to send a reservation request to ~~one or more~~ each of the contact ~~centres~~ centers in the network of contact centres including itself, said reservation request being for an agent with a specified relative intrinsic value;

- (iii) a second input arranged to receive, for ~~one or more of the said~~ reservation requests request, a value of the specified intrinsic and an associated agent identifier from each of one or more of the contact centers;
- (iv) a processor arranged to route the contact to one of the agents on the basis of the received intrinsic.

11. (currently amended) A contact ~~centre~~ center suitable for use in a network of contact ~~centres~~ centers, said contact ~~centre~~ center comprising:

- (i) an input arranged to receive a contact;
- (ii) an output arranged to send a reservation request to ~~one or more~~ each of the contact ~~centres~~ centers in the network of contact centres including itself, said reservation request being for a nodal longest idle agent;
- (iii) a second input arranged to receive, for ~~one or more of the said~~ reservation requests request, a nodal longest idle time and associated agent identifier from each of one or more of the contact centers;
- (iv) a processor arranged to route the contact to the agent with the longest of all the received nodal longest idle times.

12. (currently amended) A communications network comprising a plurality of contact ~~centres~~ centers each as claimed in claim 10.

13. (currently amended) A communications network as claimed in claim 12 wherein each of said contact ~~centres~~ centers comprises a contact ~~centre~~ center server and a switch.

14. (currently amended) A communications network as claimed in claim 13 said contact ~~centre~~ center servers being linked to one another by a first part of said communications network and said switches being linked to one another by a second part of said communications network, said first and second parts being substantially isolated from one another.

15. (currently amended) A communications network as claimed in claim 13 wherein each contact ~~centre~~ center server is connected to its associated switch using a dedicated embedded local area network connection.